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Summary record of the 43rd meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Ali ..... (Malaysia)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 147: Financing of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (A/62/645, A/62/753, A/62/781/Add.11 and A/62/796)

Agenda item 152: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (A/62/648, A/62/764 and A/62/781/Add.10)

1. **Mr. Karia** (Peacekeeping Financing Division), speaking as Officer-in-Charge of the Peacekeeping Financing Division and introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for the period from 25 August 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/62/645), recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/249 B, had appropriated an amount of $184,819,900 for the establishment and maintenance of the Mission. Expenditure for the period had been $146,848,800, leaving an unencumbered balance of $37,971,100, which represented a budget implementation rate of 79.5 per cent.

2. Variances had been due mainly to reduced requirements under facilities and infrastructure and communications, owing to the postponement of the planned deployment of United Nations police officers and formed police units to 65 subdistricts and to the cancellation of the planned acquisition of various items of equipment, respectively. The General Assembly was invited to decide how to treat the unencumbered balance of $37,971,100, as well as other income and adjustments amounting to $1,106,900.

3. Introducing the Secretary-General's note on financing arrangements for UNMIT for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (A/62/796), he recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/249 C, had appropriated a total of $153,159,800 for the maintenance of the Mission. Additional requirements amounting to $16,436,500 represented a 10.7 per cent increase over the initial appropriation.

4. Variances were primarily attributable to additional requirements resulting from the postponement of the planned drawdown of United Nations police personnel, the accelerated recruitment of international staff and the retention of temporary staff and United Nations Volunteers beyond 1 July 2007. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate and assess the amount of $16,436,500 for the maintenance of the Mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, in addition to the amount of $160,589,900 already appropriated for the same period under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 61/249 C.

5. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the budget for UNMIT for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/753), he said that the proposed total of $173,439,800 represented a 13.2 per cent increase over the budget for the preceding period. That variance was primarily attributable to additional requirements under United Nations police, international and national staff, communications and information technology. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate the amount of $173,439,800 for the maintenance of UNMIT for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, assess the amount of $114,517,786 at a monthly rate of $14,453,316 for the period from 1 July 2008 to 26 February 2009 and, should the Security Council decide to continue the mandate of the Mission, assess the remaining amount of $58,922,014 at the same monthly rate for the period from 27 February to 30 June 2009.

6. Introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/62/648), he recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/276, had appropriated an amount of $714,613,300 for the maintenance of the Mission. Expenditure for the period had been $676,254,800, leaving an unencumbered balance of $38,411,300, which represented a budget implementation rate of 94.6 per cent.

7. Variances had been due mainly to reduced requirements under military contingents as a result of the earlier than anticipated repatriation of military personnel and the Security Council's decision to decrease the authorized military component. In addition, the reconfiguration of the Mission's police component had led to a reduction in the number of authorized United Nations police personnel and a corresponding increase in the formed police unit strength. The General Assembly was invited to decide how to treat the unencumbered balance of $38,411,300, as well as other income and adjustments amounting to $46,097,200.

8. Lastly, introducing the Secretary-General's report on the budget for UNMIL for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/764), he said that the

proposed total of $688,383,400 represented a 12.3 per cent decrease over the budget for the preceding period. That variance was primarily attributable to reduced requirements under both military contingents and police personnel. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate the amount of $603,708,000 for the maintenance of the Mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 and, should the Security Council decide to continue the mandate of the Mission, assess that amount at a monthly rate of $50,309,000.

9. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the performance report and proposed budget for UNMIT (A/62/781/Add.11), said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $597,800 in the proposed budget for UNMIT for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, essentially as a result of the non-approval of five international posts and one United Nations Volunteer position. The Secretary-General had indicated that one of the main reasons for the increase in the proposed resource requirements for UNMIT and for the request for an additional $16.4 million for the current period was the postponement, due to the worsening security situation in Timor-Leste, of the drawdown of United Nations police and formed police units. However, the performance report for the period 2006/07 revealed underexpenditures amounting to 20.5 per cent of the total appropriation for the period. It was clear that the Mission had experienced difficulties in its planning process, some of which were attributable to the volatile nature of the situation on the ground.

10. The Advisory Committee continued to believe that that the Mission's management structure was top-heavy and out of proportion to its size and activities, especially when compared to the structure of other larger and more complex missions. Nevertheless, it was not recommending any changes at the present time in view of the forthcoming submission to the Security Council, by 1 August 2008, of a report of the Secretary-General containing, inter alia, recommendations for possible changes to the Mission's mandate and strength. In the first quarter of 2008, an expert mission had conducted a thorough assessment of the requirements of the national police as well as possible adjustments to UNMIT police skill sets. Accordingly, the Secretary-General should review the management structure of the Mission on the basis of the outcome of the Council's consideration of his forthcoming report and reflect any changes in the proposed budget for 2009/10.

11. The vacancy situation at UNMIT continued to present serious challenges, particularly at the senior managerial and professional levels. The Mission should therefore work closely with Headquarters to improve the situation and report on progress made in the context of the next budget submission.

12. Turning to the Advisory Committee's report on the performance report and proposed budget for UNMIL (A/62/781/Add.10), she said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposals for UNMIL for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009. As far as posts were concerned, the Advisory Committee welcomed the Secretary-General's initiatives to phase out the practice of hiring individual contractors for functions of a continuing nature and the conversion of international posts to national posts, which contributed to national capacity-building.

13. While recognizing that the Mission was in the drawdown phase, the Advisory Committee nevertheless saw merit in the implementation of quick-impact projects and therefore recommended approval of the proposed budget of $1 million for such projects for 2008/09. Lastly, with regard to the drawdown and eventual withdrawal of UNMIL from Liberia, the Advisory Committee emphasized the roles and responsibilities of the United Nations country team in progressively taking over functions performed by UNMIL in order to ensure a successful transition from recovery to development.

14. **Ms. Stevens** (Australia), speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand (CANZ), said that the CANZ delegations were committed to assisting the Government and people of Timor-Leste to take primary responsibility for the development of a stable and more prosperous nation. They were heartened by the Government's response to the events of 11 February 2008 and by the lifting of the state of emergency, but wished to stress that the country continued to need the support of the international community to overcome a number of remaining challenges.

15. UNMIT played a crucial role in consolidating democracy in Timor-Leste and furthering the process

of national reconciliation. It was a key partner in efforts to reform and rebuild the country's security sector, efforts designed to establish a culture of respect for human rights and the rule of law and to improve humanitarian conditions. The CANZ delegations hoped that the Mission would intensify its work in that sphere.

16. She welcomed the Secretary-General's prudent approach to the budget proposals for UNMIT for 2008/09 and pointed out that his recommendations concerning the Mission's staffing structure served to validate the current arrangements. The executive policing function provided by UNMIT, as well as its role in supporting the lasting reform of the National Police of Timor-Leste, were ongoing tasks of the Mission and much remained to be done to rebuild national capacity in that area. Accordingly, since the situation in Timor-Leste remained fragile, a cautious approach should be adopted when planning for the Mission's future, particularly with regard to a possible drawdown of personnel, especially police officers; due consideration should also be given to the Mission's capacity-building and humanitarian responsibilities.

17. The CANZ delegations had taken note of the Advisory Committee's comments concerning the level of certain posts within UNMIT but maintained that the staffing structure was commensurate with the Mission's mandate and its responsibilities in the area of cooperation with international partners on the ground. The high vacancy rate at UNMIT remained cause for concern, however, and an update from the Secretariat on the situation would be appreciated. Such staffing difficulties, which were not unique to UNMIT, served to underline the importance of addressing human resources reform across the Organization; the CANZ delegations hoped that significant progress would be made on that front at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

18. Lastly, the unforeseen, continued deployment of United Nations police personnel in Timor-Leste had led to additional requirements for 2007/08. Since $9.5 million of that amount would be accommodated within the appropriation approved by the General Assembly for the 2007/08 period, the Secretary-General was requesting additional resources in the amount of $16.4 million. The CANZ delegations were satisfied with his arguments in that regard.

19. **Mr. Debabeche** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group, noted that, as a result of significant progress towards the consolidation of peace and security in Liberia, UNMIL had entered the drawdown phase. He welcomed the proposed budget for the Mission for 2008/09, which had been prepared using the results-based framework and reflected the resource requirements for that period. It was imperative that the Fifth Committee provided UNMIL with the resources it needed to implement its mandate and to ensure lasting peace in Liberia.

20. While the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia had described the country as a place of hope, she had also cautioned that such hope was tempered by a tenuous and fragile peace. Thus, the Mission's drawdown strategy must provide for the time and space needed to ensure that Liberia could build up its own police and military forces, thereby progressively assuming full responsibility for national security.

21. The African Group welcomed the proposed conversion of international posts to national posts and commended the Mission's efforts to build national human resources capacity. The Group attached great importance to the implementation of quick-impact projects, which served not only to raise awareness of the Organization's activities in a given country but also, indirectly, to build capacity and enhance know-how among national entrepreneurs. In that connection, it concurred with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee contained in paragraph 33 of its report on UNMIL. The Advisory Committee's remaining recommendations would be considered further during informal consultations, during which the Group trusted that the Secretariat would offer detailed explanations of the potential impact of any proposed resource reductions.

22. Lastly, to guarantee a successful transition from recovery to development in Liberia, it was essential to define clearly the roles and responsibilities of the United Nations country team as it took over the Mission's functions.

23. **Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura** (Brazil) expressed his strong support for a sovereign, stable, democratic and developed Timor-Leste, as well as for UNMIT, which must be provided with the resources necessary to implement its mandate. The Mission should be able to support the efforts of the Government and people of

Timor-Leste to consolidate democracy and further national reconciliation through the use of its good offices and the promotion of measures to enhance long-term stability. It should also assist in the design and implementation of poverty eradication and economic growth policies. While he welcomed the fact that the Mission had worked in tandem with various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, he also reiterated that relevant departments of the Organization, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, should also support and cooperate with UNMIT.

24. In February 2008, the Brazilian Government had expressed great concern over the attempted assassinations of the President and Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, had condemned the use of violence and had exhorted all political and security forces to redouble their efforts to maintain order and to solve political issues by means of understanding and peaceful dialogue. Indeed, the prevailing security situation in the country had necessitated adjustments to the operational requirements of UNMIT, resulting in the postponement of the planned drawdown of United Nations police personnel. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's request for additional appropriations for the period 2007/08 and, in that connection, urged him to take further measures to reduce vacancy rates.

25. While he shared the Advisory Committee's views on quick-impact projects and therefore supported the related recommendation contained in paragraph 33 of its report, he disagreed with the Advisory Committee's assertion that the management structure of UNMIT was top-heavy. UNMIT should not be compared to other peacekeeping missions, since each of them had a unique mandate and operational requirements. It was not appropriate to adopt a template approach to peacekeeping activities. In view of the forthcoming consideration by the Security Council of the report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste, he welcomed the fact that the Advisory Committee had not recommended any changes to the Mission's management structure.

26. **Mr. Torres Lépori** (Argentina) endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Brazil. He expressed concern about the delayed implementation of a number of quick-impact projects in Timor-Leste and called on the Secretariat to provide appropriate explanations.

27. **Mr. Dowana** (Liberia) expressed his gratitude to the international community for its efforts to assist the Government and people of Liberia.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.